



Keeping In Touch

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Committees & Leadership:
Community Security (vice chair)
Transportation
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Joint Committee on Pension Policy
Joint Select Committee on Veterans & Military Affairs
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There Ought To Be a Law

Some of the best ideas for improvements or change come from people who deal with real problems every day.

Everyone has a couple ideas on how to solve problems or make things better. I'd like to hear yours.

There ought to be a law... _____

I'd like to be notified about upcoming Town Hall meetings by:

e-mail address: _____

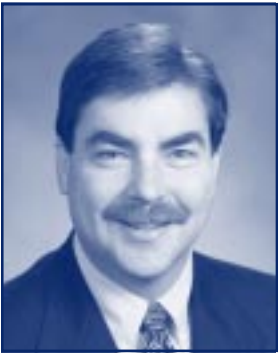
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Representative
Geoff Simpson

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Representative
Geoff Simpson



2002 Session Report

Dear neighbors,

When I ask people what they think should be the number one priority of state government, one issue keeps coming up along with education and the economy: traffic gridlock.

I'm happy to report that after twenty years of delays, studies and political excuses, the Legislature finally took real action to unclog traffic.

We broke through the gridlock in Olympia and on Interstate 5.

This year, the Legislature also took important action to help our schools and create jobs.

Inside this newsletter:

- Why I voted for the transportation plan, and what it means for our district
- What the Legislature did to improve our schools
- How we're working to create local jobs

One of my primary duties as your representative is to keep you informed about what's going on in Olympia, but it helps me to be a better legislator when I get to hear from you.

At the end of this newsletter is a chance for you to speak out. Some of the best ideas for laws come from folks who aren't even really interested in politics. Our state's founders wanted the laws created by citizen-legislators, not full-time politicians. That's why we have a part-time Legislature, made up of citizens from all walks of life.

"There ought to be a law" is your chance to suggest reforms to solve the problems we all face.

It's an honor and privilege serving as your representative. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Geoff Simpson
State Representative, 47th District

Session Report 2002

Unclogging traffic

There's nothing more frustrating than getting out of the door in a hurry for work or an appointment only to get stuck in a traffic jam.

We have some of the worst traffic in the nation — but we're finally doing something about it.

After years of political bickering, finger pointing, delays and too many studies, the Legislature took three important steps to unclog traffic:

1. Passed several major reforms to make transportation more efficient and accountable;
2. Came up with a plan for King, Pierce and Snohomish counties to fix traffic as a region; and
3. A statewide plan to unclog traffic gridlock — and voters have the final say this November.



The top problem facing our state

After working to make sure South King County was well represented, I voted for the transportation solutions because our local economy and our entire state's future depends on fixing traffic gridlock. It's the No. 1 problem facing our state. A healthy business climate requires a healthy transportation system and I don't want to see one more company move out of state because they can't get their goods or services to market quickly.

We're paying more in hidden taxes right now than any solution would cost.

Each year, gridlock costs you and me \$930 and 53 hours of our lives, time we should be spending with our family and can never get back.

A nine-cent gas tax increase would cost the average driver (and in many cases an entire family) well under \$100 a year. Take the number of miles driven per year, divided by the number of miles per gallon for your car, multiplied by .09 cents. For me it's about \$3.10 a month for my small car, and \$4.80 for my wife's minivan.

Giving citizens the final say

I voted to send the statewide plan to the people in November because it's the right thing to do. I'd rather do it right the first time and ask for voter approval on a decision this important, than to have another set-back because the legislature was too arrogant to let the people who'll pay decide.

Education

Keeping faith with the people

Despite a \$1.6 billion budget deficit, we found a way to balance the budget and keep the faith with the voters by funding two education initiatives.

The \$800 million in funding will reduce overcrowding in classrooms, give teachers fairer pay and make our local schools better.



Local projects

Two local colleges will get important funding. Working with key legislators, I made sure that Green River Community College and Renton Technical College got the funding they needed to make badly needed repairs and improvements. If we don't actively advocate for our tax dollars to be returned to our area, they get sent somewhere else in the state.

Safe schools



We also passed landmark legislation to make our children safer from intimidation, harassment and bullying.

Our schools should be safe havens for kids; a place to learn without worrying that someone is going to bother them. I'm proud that this legislation finally passed,

and that I was a sponsor of it.

A better economy

This session, we focused on improving the economy and creating jobs. For the first time, the House formed a committee dedicated to making our state more competitive.

The committee built on the work of the governor's Competitiveness Council, and the House passed a number of bills to help create jobs, and to keep businesses in Washington.

Kent Station

Locally, I worked hard to get funding for Kent Station. It's not a train station, but a new focal point for downtown Kent that will replace an old chemical factory with a mix of restaurants, theaters, housing and business.

I successfully pushed for \$900,000 in the capital budget to help get this project off the ground. Construction will begin later this year, and I'm excited at the opportunities this project will bring to our area.

Budgets

It's interesting to play "what if" with the budget. Go to the Seattle Times website and try to balance the budget. You can try any option and see what happens to the bottom line.

Ax or tax: you write the budget

<http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/budget/>

Link to all budgets

http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/index_final_s2.asp

Seniors

The Legislature worked on two big issues important to seniors: prescription drugs and fair insurance rates.

Prescription drugs

We can and must do something to reduce drug costs. People who depend on these medicines for their health have waited too long for reforms to bring prices back to earth. Drug companies spend \$4 billion a year on advertising and are one of the most profitable — and taxpayer subsidized — industries in the nation.

Consumers need a break.

Unfortunately, legislation to give people lower prices for medicines didn't make it to the House floor for a vote. But this issue isn't dead. We need real reforms that help people.

Insurance rates

What's your credit rating have to do with your car insurance?

Most people think car insurance prices should be based on their driving record. But more and more insurance companies are using your credit rating instead. Your bills could double — or a company could drop your insurance, even if you've got a perfect driving record.

This year, I worked to pass a bill that reformed this practiced. I don't think seniors — or anyone else — should pay higher insurance rates because they pay for things with cash or have a mistake on their credit report.

Mobile homes

Last year, the Legislature created a task force to look at regulations on mobile and manufactured homes. This year, we passed a reform (Senate Bill 6364) that follows the recommendations of that task force and creates a pilot project to cut red tape. It also lets local government regulate health and safety issues instead of the state.

Many citizens told me owners of mobile and manufactured homes shouldn't deal with more paperwork and bureaucracy than any other homeowners. I agree, and this bill brings us closer to that goal.